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Paris Peace Conference

The Bulgarian delegation,
Peace Conference...

[Paris?]

[1919?]

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THE BULGARIAN DELEGATION — PEACE CONFERENCE

REMARKS ON THE SERBIAN CLAIMS TO BULGARIAN TERRITORY

In a Memorandum to the Peace Conference the Serbian Government puts forward a certain number of territorial claims which constitute a menace for the entire western frontier of Bulgaria, from the Danube to Belassitza Mountain, on a length of 320 kilometers and a breadth of 20-70 kilometers. The demands in question are presented in the form of unimportant frontier rectifications, but in reality they aim at the annexation of vast territories, inhabited exclusively by Bulgarians. This so-called rectification would, as a matter of fact, take from Bulgaria and hand over to Serbia an area of some 12,000 square kilometers, comprising the purely Bulgarian historic towns of Viddin, Koula, Belogradchik, Tzaribrod, Trn, Bossilegrad, Kustendil, Stroumitza and Petrich, with a population of nearly half a million souls.

In advancing these claims, our Western neighbours are once more trying to lay hand on our territory and to repeat what they have done on three former occasions, namely: in 1833 when they annexed the valley of Timok; in 1878 when the Congress of Berlin gave Serbia the Bulgarian regions along the Bulgarian Morava and the Nishava, and again in 1913 when the Serbs usurped the greater part of Macedonia.

The Bulgarian nation, which settled in the Balkan Peninsula at a very early period of the Middle Ages, now inhabits the lands situated between the Danube, the

Aegean sea, the lake of Ochrida and the Black sea. During their long historic career, they created their own national institutions, cultivated the fine arts, possessed a literature and had an autonomous Church. Towards the end of 14th century, when the Turkish torrent overwhelmed Bulgaria, the invaders found there a people with distinct individuality and with a well-defined national physiognomy. Under the yoke of the conqueror, the Bulgarian people fell back upon itself and, sustained by the memory of a glorious past, traversed long centuries of spiritual serfdom which was again to be followed by partial political emancipation.

The gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire and the reappearance along its borders of independent principalities, founded by Serbians, Greeks and Roumanians, helped to awaken the national spirit of the enslaved Bulgarian nation. But at the same time the Bulgarians had, as helpless witnesses, to watch how the newly arisen principalities appropriated and incorporated with their territory several of the Bulgarian frontier districts.

In 1833, Serbia extended her possessions to the north-west, laying hold of the valley of Timok with the towns of Kladovo, Negotin, Zaicbar, Gourgousovetz (now Knjaevitz), inhabited, as the contemporary Serbian statistics themselves admit, by 150,000 Bulgarians and 40,000 Roumanians (1).

In 1878, principally at the instigation of the Austro-Hungarian delegates, the Congress of Berlin awarded to Serbia new territories carved from predominantly Bulgarian regions. The valleys of the Bulgarian Morava and of the Nishava became in their turn part of the Serbian Principality. The protests of the Bulgarian population of the entire department of Pirot to Emperor Alexander II and to the Russian Governor-General in Sofia (2) found no echo in Berlin although they were supported by the Russian delegates (3). The work of denationalisation in the ceded districts began almost immediately: the Bulgarian churches, schools and reading-rooms were closed by the Serbian Government and passed under its control, while the Bulgarian bishops and teachers had to go into exile. By an order of the Serbian Military administration, dated 8th February 1878, the population was baptised « Serbian » and the inhabitants were forbidden to call themselves « Bulgarian » (4).

It was only after this had taken place that part of the Bulgarian nation was recalled by the Congress of Berlin to an autonomous political life. While Danubian Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia obtained autonomy, Macedonia was left under the yoke of the Sultan. Some 35 years later, in 1913, this essentially Bulgarian province was assigned by the Treaty of Bucharest to Serbia which, having obtained it by force, could only maintain herself there by oppression. Ochrida, the sacred town of the Bulgarians, the capital of the ancient Bulgarian Kingdom and the see of the Bulgarian patriarchs; Bitolia, where in 1903 the standard of the memorable Bulgarian insurrection against the iniquities of the Turkish regime was first unfurled;

(1) D. Momirovitch, Précis d'histoire et de géographie de la Serbie, Petrograde, 1830, p. 73.

(2) « Shornik » of the Ministry of Education of Bulgaria, XI, pp. 296-298.

(3) A. S. Anoutchine, Le Congrès de Berlin de 1878, Petrograde, 1912, p. 87.

(4) The Serbian review « Delo », 1908, pp. 52-53.

Scopie, Shitip, Veles, all brilliant centres of Bulgarian thought and birth-places of a whole crowd of champions of freedom who died in heroes either by Turkish bullets or on the gallows — all these places and their surroundings passed under Serbian rule. Their religious, educational and national privileges, which had been tolerated even by the Turkish oppressors, disappeared in a day and the population which for ten centuries had not ceased to proclaim its Bulgarian nationality had, by superior order, to call itself henceforth Serbian. On September 21st October 4th-November 1913, King Peter promulgated in the newly conquered territory regulations concerning the public safety whose draconic enactments aroused such indignation (1) that the socialist newspaper « Rabotnitchke Novine » wrote: « If it be true that we liberated these territories, why do we introduce there an exceptional regime? If Serbians inhabit them, why are they not treated on a footing of equality with all the Serbians? » And the report of the International Commission when examining the same subject is driven to the conclusion that « manifestly Macedonia was not Old Serbia » (2).

Yet, at the very hour when bleeding mankind slowly recovers from the horrors of the war and, thirsting for peace, hopes to find in the decisions of the Peace Conference the stamp of a higher form of justice and the frame-work of a new international status, the Serbian Government once again is stretching arm towards regions which not only are inhabited by a Bulgarian population, but also constitute an integral part of the political organism of Bulgaria and have during the last 40 years lived, as fraction of the whole, an independent political life. The inhabitants of the coveted districts have shared with the rest of their compatriots all the joys and sorrows of the Bulgarian nation; they have taken an active part in its struggles and anxieties, its political, economic and cultural enterprises; they have powerfully contributed to the building up and the development of the political, religious and cultural institutions of modern Bulgaria.

They have never shown signs of discontent with Bulgaria or a desire to separate from her; they have never even conceived of such a thing as living under the authority of another state. On the contrary, satisfied with their lot, they took an active part in the four consecutive wars of new Bulgaria and, in defending their mother country from the enemy, gave proof of exemplary courage, self-abnegation and tenacity. In three of these wars they even fought against the Serbians, and in 1913, when Viddin was cut from the rest of Bulgarian, the army and the population in that town, surmounting all difficulties, withstood heroically a siege lasting several weeks. It is also well-known that the same town gave the first Bulgarian Exarch. When the Bulgarian church won its independence, Mgr Antim, Metropolitan of Viddin, was placed at the head of the Exarchate. A few years later, in 1879, the same prelate acted as president of the Bulgarian Constituent Assembly at Tirnovo.

And what are the arguments by which Serbia tries to justify her exorbitant

(1) Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Report on the Balkan wars, Paris, 1914, pp. 145-148.

(2) Ibid. p. 148.

pretensions? The Memorandum of the Serbian Government only adduces strategic considerations, supplementing them in a casual way with a few ethnographic and historical motives.

A brief survey of these arguments will show how far they contain any truth or correspond to the real state of things.

I. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS.

Before examining these considerations, we must draw attention to the fact that the wish of the Serbian Government to annex parts of the territory of Bulgaria, even in the guise of frontier rectifications, is in flagrant contradiction with the noble principles which have inspired the decisions of the Peace Conference. Among the principles on which the Conference desires to build a just and lasting peace, as well as the future relations of States, there is one whose manifest equity meets with general acceptance, namely: that the political frontiers between states ought not to rest on violence or victory, but should express the sentiments of the interested populations. «Peoples and provinces,» as has been proclaimed by the high authority of President Wilson, «ought not to be any longer bartered between governments as herds of cattle, or exchanged as pawns on a chess-board». The peoples can no longer be used as coins which pass from hand to hand, in accordance with the whims or the interests of the stronger party. Neither can they be used by the victor as means for attaining strategic objects. The nations, whether they be big or small, are equal among themselves and, to-day, the national feeling alone can justify the taking of territory from one country and handing it over to another country. Not a square yard of territory was taken from Germany for strategic reasons. The Conference will certainly not sanction such methods at Bulgaria's expense, especially in favour of an aggrandized Serbia, with a population three times larger, with an intact army and with the additional guarantee which she will find in the League of Nations.

But the strategic considerations which the Serbian Government invokes in support of its claims are devoid of all foundation. They may be summed up in the following sentence: The present frontier does not guarantee security to the valleys of Morava, Timok and Vardar which are situated in close proximity to the Bulgarian territory: this security can only be obtained by moving the frontier of Bulgaria further to the east.

Our reply to this Serbian reasoning is as follows:

It is true that the railways of the Morava and the Vardar and the Timok lie at certain points very close to the Bulgarian frontier. But this fact in itself constitutes no sufficient motive for displacing the frontier, it being a matter of common knowledge that the frontiers of States are not traced with an eye to the railways, but that

on the contrary these latter are adapted to the existing frontiers and to strategic requirements.

The same may be also said about the lines of defense whose choice is determined by existing territorial conditions. Besides, it is somewhat unusual to make the fixing of a frontier dependent on the desire to guarantee the security of a base situated in the territory of a third State, as is the case with Salonica which the Serbian Memorandum has in view. Even admitting that as the result of a favourable concurrence of political and military circumstances, the Serbian army operating in Macedonia should wish to utilise Salonica as a base, the safest and most natural line of communication would always be the line Salonica-Bitolia, Gradsko, Veles, Scopie, Nisch.

So much as regards the principle. On the other hand, the present line of the Serbo-Bulgarian frontier which follows the highest mountain chains and summits between Bulgaria and Serbia offers the aspects not only of a natural frontier line, but also of a strategic frontier. In proof of this one has only to enumerate the summits through which the line runs: Vrashka-Tchouka (740 m.), Midjor (2,188 m.), Tri-Tchouki (2,032 m.), Koutchi-Baba (1,730 m.), Stol (1,357 m.), Tchertni-Vrh (1,495 m.), Besna-Kobula (1,926 m.), Pataritza (1,705 m.), Deve-Bair (1,191 m.), Rouen (2,225 m.), Toukov-Vrh (1,207 m.), Hassan-Pasha (1,425 m.), Zrnoga (1,415 m.), Kadlitza (1,000 m.), Klepalo (1,300 m.), the mountains of Ograjden and of Belasitza.

The Serbian argument that the safety of Sofia will not be endangered if the frontier line were brought closer to that town, since the retrenched camp of Slivnitza would still remain in Bulgarian hands, is inconsistent and only tends to screen the certain peril to which the Bulgarian capital will be exposed. To begin with, such a thing as the entrenched camp of Slivnitza has never existed. All that one finds there is a mere field position, with a few primitive trenches. The limited extent of this position does not offer Sofia except an illusory defence. Even if it does not fall into the hands of the enemy, this latter can always turn it, by approaching Sofia along the road Ghintzi-Petrohan, or by way of Radomir and Breznik. It is true that in 1885 a few Bulgarian regiments held in that position the Serbian army which, under the leadership of king Milan, had attacked and crossed the defenceless Bulgarian frontiers. But the success of the Bulgarian arms on that occasion was not due to any superiority of the Bulgarian positions, or to a more numerous artillery: it was the result of the spirit animating the Bulgarian soldiers and of their devotion to freedom.

On the other hand, Serbia in attempting to annex the mountain chains of the present frontier and to descend into the valleys, ignores the economic needs of the populations immediately concerned, those which would pass under Serbian domination, as well as those which will still form part of Bulgaria. The frontier line proposed by the Serbians would have for result the total ruin of all those places which will find themselves cut from their natural markets. If these regions were to be assigned to Serbia, their inhabitants to reach the Serbian administrative and commercial centres would have to traverse mountain chains which are impassable.

sable during the winter months. What is more, such a monstrous rectification would cut off the route from Sofia to Lom-Palanka on the Danube, which traverses the Balkan at Petrohan. The same thing will happen to the only road which connects Western Bulgaria and Sofia with the valley of Strouma, so that the only way of reaching the extensive region between Doubnitsa and Melnik-Roupel would be by aeroplane.

To support the Serbian claims and to excuse the demand for strategical boundaries, the Memorandum lays stress on the so-called duplicity of the Bulgarians towards Serbia in the past as well as during more recent times. History, however, proves the contrary and reverses the parts.

Thus, in 9th Century the Serbian Joupan Mountimir consolidated his power with the help of the Bulgarian Prince Boris. In 917 the Joupanate of Zahloumie was helped by the Bulgarians to group under its hegemony the contending Serbian tribes. In 923, when a Bulgarian Army was trying to put an end to their civil wars, the Serbians turned round and defeated it, the heads of the Bulgarian chieftains being cut off and sent to Byzantium. The next year, whilst the Bulgarian Tzar Simeon was besieging Constantinople, the Serbians attacked the Bulgarians in the back. After concluding peace with the Byzantine Empire, Simeon returned and inflicted condign punishment upon the treacherous Joupan. In 930 the Serbs took advantage of the civil wars which had broken out in Bulgaria to conclude a secret treaty with the Greeks to attack the Bulgarians. Towards the end of 10th Century the Bulgarian Tzar Samuel fought and defeated the Serbs in Dioclide, capturing their Prince Ivan-Wladimir whom he afterwards restored to power and married to his daughter Kossara. The day before the battle of Velboujd (1330) the Serbs asked for an armistice of two days. The Bulgarians agreed and sent part of their army to the neighbouring villages for forage; whereupon the Serbians treacherously attacked the Bulgarian camp and killed the Bulgarian Tzar.

The War of 1885 is another good instance of Serbian treachery. While the Bulgarian Army was concentrated near Adrianople in readiness against the threatening Turks, the Serbians crossed without warning the entirely undefended Bulgarian frontier.

In 1913 the Serbians refused to carry out the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of 1912 and came to an agreement with Greece on 22nd April-5th May, 1913—two months before the second Balkan war (1)—thus disrupting the Balkan Alliance which had produced such excellent results.—(2)—

(1) The Greek White Book. Paris-Nancy 1918, p. 5 and following.

(2) The Bulgarian Question and the Balkan States. Account and documents. Published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sofia 1919, p. 31 and following.

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II. ETHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The Serbian Government invokes in support of its thesis ethnic considerations which are no better founded nor more solid than its other arguments. They may be epitomized in the affirmation that the inhabitants of the coveted region, the so-called «Shopes», by their ethnical qualities, their language and their characteristic national customs (slava, zadrouga or family community, etc.) undisputedly belong to the pure Serbian race. The language spoken in this region is the western dialect of the ordinary Bulgarian language, and offers all the peculiarities which characterise the Bulgarian language and distinguish it from the Serbian. This dialect has neither declensions, nor cases (the Serbians use seven cases, both for the singular and plural), nor the infinitive mood; it employs no degrees of comparison as the Serbian, no Serbian length in the vowel system, etc. On the contrary, its aspect is that of a purely analytical and modern language, with the use of the article, with no cases, with verbal forms, with the ordinary tonic accent, even on the last syllable, and with a vocabulary possessing the same linguistic peculiarities as the ordinary Bulgarian language.

Bulgarian by language, this «Shope» population was known under the national name «Bulgarian» all through the Middle Ages and during the long period of servitude under the Turks, down to present time. It calls itself by that name and has been so called by all foreigners, by the Turks who ruled over it, and even by the Serbians themselves, barring the Memorandum of the Serbian Government. To produce one of the many Serbian testimonies, we shall quote the greatest Serbian scholar of modern times, M. Y. Cvyic, professor at the University of Belgrade and now in Paris, as councillor of the Serbian Peace Delegation. On his ethnographical map of the Balkan Peninsula, published in 1913, all the contested region from Viddin to Belassitza is represented as peopled by Bulgarians. (1).— In his book of «Recollections», recently published in English, M. Matovitch, former Minister of Serbia in London, also speaks of the «Shopes», or the inhabitants of these regions, as «Bulgarians» of the purest blood, with Sophia as their metropolis, adding that they have always been considered as one of the most typical among the Bulgarian tribes.

With respect to the «Zadrouga» (or family community) and the festival of patron saints which the Serbian Memorandum considers as typical signs of the Serbian race, we must draw attention to the fact that they are common to the entire Bulgarian nation and to part of the Russian people. Each trade guild in the towns of Bulgaria has its patron saint; another custom is the placing of each village under the protection of a saint, who is considered as its patron and to whom, once a year,

(1) Prof. Dr Y. Cvyic. Ethnographische Karte der Balkanhalbinsel [Petermanns Geogr. Mitteilungen. Jahrgang 1913, 1, Tafel, 22].

bulls or another animals are sacrificed. By so reasoning, the existence of the festival might warrant the Serbians to claim as their own the ancient city of Rome, so famous for these same festivals. What is more, the Byzantine chroniclers of XI Century testify to the celebration of these festivities by the Bulgarians. In 1018 Ivach, a military chief appointed by the Bulgarian Tzar Samuel, celebrated his patronal festivity on Assumption day.

The Serbian Statement speaks of petitions addressed by the towns of Trn and Breznik to the Berlin Congress (1878) in which they asked to remain under Serbian rule. What really happened was as follows: In 1877, after the capture of Plevna by the Russians, whose victory now seemed assured, the Serbians in their turn declared war on Turkey and hastened to occupy, among other places, the districts of Trn and Pirot. They tried to obtain by force signatures in favour of the annexation of those districts to Serbia, but the Russian Government immediately protested against this pressure put on the Bulgarian population. The Serbian Minister at Petrograd informed his government that M. de Giers had told him that «he would not give 2 kopeks for such signatures, as they were pure Serbian machinations». (1) Here is what General Anoutchine, Russian Delegate to the Congress of Berlin writes on the same subject: «I said that even if there were votes in favour of Serbia, it was solely because those localities are unfortunately occupied by Serbian troops and because the Serbian Administration is committing terrible excesses and forces the clergy to mention in their prayers the name of Prince Milan. The Metropolitan of Pirot, having protested against the Serbian rule, has been arrested and conveyed to Nisch where he is kept prisoner. Is it possible in such conditions to speak of a Plebiscite? This would be a shameful farce conducted by the «natchalniks» (assistant prefects) who oppress the country because we did not occupy it with our troops. Ristitch was vexed, but could not disprove my arguments». (2)

The rights of the Bulgarian race to the region claimed by the Serbs have been acknowledged by all the great Powers which took part in the Conference of Constantinople in 1876-1877. It was then that the boundaries of the Bulgarian lands were for the first time fixed in accordance with the existing ethnographical data concerning the Balkans and in conformity with the reports of the Consuls in Turkey. What is more, even Turkey which offered the strongest opposition recognised that in all the country between Viddin and Satonica «the Bulgarian element predominated exclusively. (3)

(1) J. Ristitch. The Diplomatic History of Serbia. (Vol. I, p. 140). In Serbian.

(2) A. S. Anoutchine. The Congress of Berlin 1878, Petrograd, 1912, p. 87 (In Russian).

(3) Blue-Book, Turkey No 2 (1877). Sitting of the 4th January 1877.

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III. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Finally, the Memorandum of the Serbian government invokes several historical considerations which call for examination. They are summarized in the two following passages: 1. «In the Balkan peninsula, the Bulgarians made numerous wars of conquest, against the Greeks and the Serbians, as well as on the lands of Hungary and present-day Roumania; they repeatedly invaded Thrace and Macedonia, but quickly lost them again. At length, they were reduced to impotence in consequence of the battle of Kustendil, where they were beaten in 1330 by the Serbians. A century later, the Turks occupied Bulgaria. After that the Bulgarians remained quiet and submissive to the Turkish rule till 1878, when the Russians, aided by Serbia and Roumania, liberated them.» 2. «After the fall of their state and the loss of their independence towards the end of the 13th century, the Serbs managed to preserve their patriarchate, which was established anew at Ipek (Petch) in 1557 and existed until 1766, when it was once more suppressed. The Ipek patriarchate comprised among others the bishoprics of Kustendil and Samokov. The Bulgaria Church on the other hand was forthwith incorporated with the patriarchate of Constantinople.»

The bulk of the statements of the Serbian government are at manifest variance with the actual facts. What is more important, they ignore historical events of capital importance as regards the districts on which Serbian longing eyes are cast. Thus, it is absolutely inaccurate to say that «the Bulgarians repeatedly invaded Thrace and Macedonia, but quickly lost their hold of them again.»

On the contrary, it is an established historical fact that Macedonia has more than once formed part of the Bulgarian state during prolonged periods. Thus, from 838 to 1018, i.e. during nearly two centuries, it was included in the boundaries of the first Bulgarian kingdom. As for the territory at present claimed by the Serbians, stretching from Viddin to Strumitsa, it entered in the composition of the Bulgarian state from a still more remote period. The northern part of this territory figures within the boundaries of Bulgaria from the 8th century on. It remained integral part of Bulgaria until the opening of the 11th century, when it fell under the rule of Byzantium which held it until the end of the 12th century. But even so it was all the while a dependency of the Duke of Bulgaria, with Scopie as capital, while ecclesiastically it continued to own allegiance to the Bulgarian archbishopric at Ochrida, whose autonomy had been recognized by Byzantium with an imperial charter in 1018. It is precisely those districts of Viddin, Kustendil and Strumitsa, now coveted by Serbia, that came under the jurisdiction of this Bulgarian Church. In other words, before there existed any Serb state or church, this region during long centuries formed part of the Bulgarian State and Church.

In the course of the succeeding centuries, 13th to 15th, which witnessed the appearance of the Serbian State and Church, and down to our time, the Viddin dis-

trict has never come under the political or spiritual authority of Serbia. On the contrary, Viddin was the capital of the state of the Bulgarian king Stratsimir which, in 1365, fell under Turkish rule. The Serbs succeeded in occupying Kustendil during the first half of the 14th century. But when the Turks appeared in this region shortly after they found no trace of the Serb domination. What is more, the prince of Kustendil sided with the Turks and fought against the Serbs at Kossovo plain. His domains were called in the Turkish annals «diar-bolgar» Bulgarian land, (1) while Kustendil is described as «capital of the Bulgars.»—Strumitsa for its part has been under Serb rule but thirteen years.

Historical truth is also at variance with the further assertion, that during a certain portion of the Turkish domination the Serbian patriarchate at Ipek had jurisdiction over the Bulgarian lands now claimed by the Serbs.

For none of the towns to which claim is laid, Viddin, Kula, Belogradchik, Tzaril rod, Trn, Strumitsa, Petritch, has ever been a dependency of the Serbian Ipek patriarchate. On the contrary, they have always depended either on the Bulgarian archbishopric of Ochrida whose existence stretches over seven and a half centuries (1018-1767), or on the patriarchate of Constantinople. The bishopric of Kustendil alone recognized for a time the spiritual authority of Ipek, though that did not hinder the Serbian patriarchs themselves from giving official recognition to its Bulgarian ethnical character. 2) The canonical origin of this Serbian patriarchate at Ipek is also worth explaining. In 1557, the grand vizier Mehmed Sokolooğlu, a Mohammedan Serb, succeeded in obtaining from the Sultan a *berat* authorizing the creation of a Serb patriarchate at Ipek (Northern Albania), and its first incumbent was Makarije, brother of the powerful vizier, who had remained Christian. Two centuries later this patriarchate was abolished by the same Sultans who had created it, and the territories over which it exercised authority passed under the patriarch of Constantinople.

The statement in the Serbian Memorandum, that the Bulgarians having once been conquered by the Turks «remained quiet and submissive to the Turkish régime until 1878», is also most inaccurate. The following historical facts, so creditable to the sturdy mountaineers inhabiting the lands which are to-day coveted by the Serbs, demonstrate the falsehood of this assertion. They also display in strong relief the unshakable national consciousness of this Bulgarian population which never resigned itself to the Turkish yoke and made several armed attempts to cast it off. Turkish rule had scarcely been established in the country, when a Bulgarian insurrection broke out in 1405 in the districts of Piro and Tzaribrod, under the leadership

1) Cf. Seadeddin, *The Crown of Histories* (Tatch-ul-tevarik), Turkish manuscript at the National Library at Sofia, fol. 51; Kamazan-Zate General and Turkish History; Turkish manuscript in same library, fol. 2-8.

2) Thus, for ex. the first Serbian patriarch at Ipek styled himself: «Macarius, spiritual head of the Serbs, the Bulgars and the littoral.» All his successors bore the title «Archbishop of Ipek and Patriarch of all the Serbs, of the Bulgars, etc.» (L. Stoyanovitch, *Ancient Serbian Notes and Inscriptions*, No. 645, 751, 806, 843, 1719, etc. In Serbian). Vi sariion, metropolitan bishop of Kustendil, on his way to Moscow, in 1486, registered himself as «coming from the Bulgarian land, from the diocese of Kustendil,» etc. (Cf. *Russia's Relations with the Levant*, Petrograd, 1858, Vol. 1, p. 182. In Russian. And J. Ivanoff, *Northern Macedonia*, Sofia, 1906, p. 206. In Bulgarian).

of Prince Constantine, son of the Bulgarian Tsar Stratsimir of Viddin. And when the general Bulgarian insurrection against the Turks broke out in 1395, and a pretended scion of the royal Bulgarian house of the Shishmans was proclaimed king, the Bulgarians of the now contested region, notably those of Viddin, and of the Timok and Nishava valleys, raised the standard of revolt. Despite its sanguinary repression by Sinan Pasha, the insurrection lasted a whole year. The heads of many «Bulgarian» rebels, hoisted on stakes marking the Nishava road, struck terror into the hearts of the European travellers passing through those parts on their way to Constantinople on diplomatic errand. 1)

One hundred years later, in 1688, there occurred in this same part of Western Bulgaria the so-called Kiprovti insurrection, led by the well-known Bulgarians George Peyatchevitch, of Kiprovti, and Bogdan, of Kutlovitsa. This revolt was likewise repressed with great cruelty. A great many villages were burnt down and thousands of Bulgarians sought safety in flight to Wallachia and Transylvania.

The insurrection of 1841, again in Western Bulgaria, surpassed all preceding ones in magnitude. It won to its side the towns of Piro, Berkovitsa, Vrianya, etc. This uprising was quelled with ferocity: thousands of Bulgarians were killed; 10,000 escaped in neighbouring Serbia and «225 Bulgarian villages were destroyed,» we read in the reports of consuls of the European Powers. France sent a special commission to inquire on the spot into the events. Russia, England, Austria and the Pope were stirred into taking an interest in the matter. All the reports of the agents of the European Powers, official and unofficial Serbian documents, and the Serbian press, gave details about this revolt called «the insurrection of the Bulgarians.» The Serbian government of the day showed hostility and was even guilty of treachery towards the insurgent Bulgarians whom it claims to-day as Serbs. Ten years later, in 1851, the inhabitants of Viddin rose up in their turn, etc.

History shows no example of another province of Turkey-in-Europe more frequently rising up arms in hand against Turkish tyranny, or combating it with greater energy and perseverance.

From all that has been said it follows that it is neither the desire to cultivate good neighbourly relations in the future, nor ethnical and strategical considerations, which has led the Serbian government to ask for a rectification of the frontier. To allow the Serbian claims would be to proclaim the triumph of the principle of might and of violence in the settlement of international disputes. To admit them would mean the subjection to the Serbian yoke of a population whose one wish is to remain Bulgarian. To compel them to become Serbs is tantamount to forcing them to seek safety in wholesale emigration to Bulgaria where, exposed to the worst privations, they would become an element of trouble, capable any instant to set the Balkans on fire. This would amount to compelling the unfortunate population of Strumitsa and of Petritch, composed for the most part of Macedonian Bulgarians who have fled from the Serb and Greek rule, to fly again to Bulgaria for refuge.

[1] Fr. Seidl, *Denkwürdige Gesandtschaft an die Ottomanische Pforte*, Görlitz, 1711, p. 85.

We cherish the firm hope that the dawn of definitive peace will close the chapter of violence, that it will make operative the principles so loudly proclaimed by the President of the United States and by the Allied Powers and that the Bulgarian people will be allowed to exist and develop freely within the bounds which history and the time have assigned to it. We are deeply convinced that justice which is outside the reach of human will shall prevail, and that the peace which we have come to sign shall not be an armistice, and its work an act of vengeance.

Strong in this conviction, we place our just cause in the hands of the World Tribunal.

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